Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Site Number: 18FR14 **Site Name:** Biggs Ford

Other name(s) Snyder #35, #42

Prehistoric ☑ Historic ☐ Unknown ☐

Brief Description: Late Woodland village with 12 burials

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude 39.4824 Longitude -77.3732

Elevation 260 m Site slope 0-5%

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 17

Physiographic province Lancaster/Frederick Low

Ethnobotany profile available ☑ Maritime site ☐

SCS soil & sediment code DcA

Terrestrial site ☑ Underwater site ☐

Topography

Floodplain	☑	High terrace	☐
Hilltop/bluff	☐	Rockshelter/ cave	☐
Interior flat	☐	Hillslope	☐
Upland flat	☐	Unknown	☐
Ridgetop	☐	Other	☐
Terrace	☐		
Low terrace	☐		

Ownership

Private	☑
Federal	☐
State of MD	☐
Regional/ county/city	☐
Unknown	☐

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Glade Creek

Saltwater		Freshwater	
Ocean	☐	Stream/river	☑
Estuary/tidal river	☐	Swamp	☐
Tidewater/marsh	☐	Lake or pond	☐
		Spring	☐

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site		Woodland site		Contact period site		ca. 1820 - 1860	
Archaic site		MD Adena		ca. 1630 - 1675		ca. 1860 - 1900	
Early archaic		Early woodland	Y	ca. 1675 - 1720		ca. 1900 - 1930	
MIddle archaic		Mid. woodland	Y	ca. 1720 - 1780		Post 1930	
Late archaic		Late woodland	Y	ca. 1780 - 1820			

Unknown prehistoric context ☐ Unknown historic context ☐ Unknown context ☐

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American		Asian American	
African American		Unknown	
Anglo-American		Other	
Hispanic			

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Prehistoric

Multi-component	☑	Misc. ceremonial	☐
Village	☑	Rock art	☐
Hamlet	☐	Shell midden	☐
Base camp	☐	STU/lithic scatter	☐
Rockshelter/cave	☐	Quarry/extraction	☐
Earthen mound	☐	Fish weir	☐
Cairn	☐	Production area	☐
Burial area	☑	Unknown	☐

Other context ☐

Historic

Urban/Rural?

Domestic	☐	Furnace/forge	☐	**Military**	☐	Post-in-ground	☐
Homestead	☐	Other	☐	Battlefield	☐	Frame-built	☐
Farmstead	☐	**Transportation**	☐	Fortification	☐	Masonry	☐
Mansion	☐	Canal-related	☐	Encampment	☐	Other structure	☐
Plantation	☐	Road/railroad	☐	**Townsite**	☐	**Slave related**	☐
Row/townhome	☐	Wharf/landing	☐	**Religious**	☐	**Non-domestic agri**	☐
Cellar	☐	Maritime-related	☐	Church/mtg house	☐	**Recreational**	☐
Privy	☐	Bridge	☐	Ch support bldg	☐	**Midden/dump**	☐
Industrial	☐	Ford	☐	**Burial area**	☐	**Artifact scatter**	☐
Mining-related	☐	**Educational**	☐	Cemetery	☐	**Spring or well**	☐
Quarry-related	☐	**Commercial**	☐	Sepulchre	☐	**Unknown**	☐
Mill	☐	Trading post	☐	Isolated burial	☐	**Other context**	☐
Black/metalsmith	☐	Store	☐	**Bldg or foundation**	☐		
		Tavern/inn	☐	Possible Structure	☐		

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples		Soil samples taken	U
Flotation samples taken	Y	Other samples taken	

Historic context samples		Soil samples taken	
Flotation samples taken		Other samples taken	

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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types

Clovis		Koens-Crispin	1
Hardaway-Dalton		Perkiomen	
Palmer		Susquehana	5
Kirk (notch)	1	Vernon	1
Kirk (stem)		Piscataway	2
Le Croy	1	Calvert	
Morrow Mntn		Selby Bay	14
Guilford	2	Jacks Rf (notch)	
Brewerton	1	Jacks Rf (pent)	
Otter Creek		Madison/Potomac	144
		Levanna	76

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek		Popes Creek		Shepard	1108
Dames Qtr		Coulbourn		Townsend	
Selden Island	2	Watson		Minguannan	
Accokeek		Mockley		Sullivan Cove	
Wolfe Neck		Clemson Island		Shenks Ferry	24
Vinette	3	Page	66	Moyaone	
				Potomac Cr	

Keyser	755
Yeocomico	
Monongahela	
Susquehannock	

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware

Astbury		Ironstone		Staffordshire	
Borderware		Jackfield		Tin Glazed	
Buckley		Mn Mottled		Whiteware	
Creamware		North Devon		**Porcelain**	3
		Pearlware			

Stoneware

English Brown	
Eng Dry-bodie	
Nottingham	
Rhenish	
Wt Salt-glazed	

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts

Flaked stone	7455	Other fired clay	23
Ground stone	6	Human remain(s)	☑
Stone bowls	3	Modified faunal	96
Fire-cracked rock	7	Unmod faunal	10337
Other lithics (all)	159	Oyster shell	☐
Ceramics (all)	4552	Floral material	☑
Rimsherds	142	Uncommon Obj.	19
		Other ☐	

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)		Storage/trash pit	☑
Midden	☐	Burial(s)	☑
Shell midden	☐	Ossuary	☐
Postholes/molds	☑	Unknown	☐
House pattern(s)	☑	Other	☐
Palisade(s)	☑		
Hearth(s)	☑		
Lithic reduc area	☐		

Lithic Material

Fer quartzite	☐	Sil sandstone	☐		
Jasper	☑	Chalcedony	☐	European flint	☐
Chert	☑	Ironstone	☐	Basalt	☑
Rhyolite	☑	Argilite	☑	Unknown	☑
Quartz	☑	Steatite	☑	Other	☑
Quartzite	☑	Sandstone	☑	greenstone,red	

☑ **Dated features present at site**

Feat. 4 - elongated (Montgomery Complex) refuse-filled pit w/ a burial; Feat. 6 - circular refuse-filled pit; Feat. 20 - circular refuse-filled pit

Historic Artifacts

Pottery (all)	3	Tobacco related	
Glass (all)	1	Activity item(s)	
Architectural		Human remain(s)	☐
Furniture		Faunal material	☐
Arms		Misc. kitchen	
Clothing		Floral material	☐
Personal items		Misc.	3
		Other ☐	

Historic Features

Const feature	☐	Privy/outhouse	☐	Depression/mound	☐
Foundation	☐	Well/cistern	☐	Burial(s)	☐
Cellar hole/cellar	☐	Trash pit/dump	☐	Railroad bed	☐
Hearth/chimney	☐	Sheet midden	☐	Earthworks	☐
Postholes/molds	☐	Planting feature	☐	Mill raceway	☐
Paling ditch/fence	☐	Road/walkway	☐	Wheel pit	☐

Unknown	☐
Other	☐

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1:	915	+/- 60	years BP	Reliability	**Sample 2:**	765	+/- 70	years BP	Reliability	**Sample 3:**	550	+/- 90	years BP	Reliability
SI-3661: charcoal from elongated refuse-filled pit (feat. 4), assoc. w/ Shepard sherds, human remains, shell, fauna, ethnobotanicals, lithics & other				High	SI-3663: charcoal from circular refuse-filled pit (feat. 6), assoc. w/ Keyser and quartz temper sherds, shell, fauna, ethnobotanicals, lithics & other				Mod	SI-3662: charcoal from circular refuse-filled pit (feat. 20), assoc. w/ Shepard sherds, a shell disk, shell, fauna, ethnobotanicals, lithics & other				Mod
Sample 4:		+/-	years BP	Reliability	**Sample 5:**		+/-	years BP	Reliability	**Sample 6:**		+/-	years BP	Reliability
Sample 7:		+/-	years BP	Reliability	**Sample 8:**		+/-	years BP	Reliability	**Sample 9:**		+/-	years BP	Reliability

☐ **Additional radiocarbon results available**

Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18FR14 **Site Name:** Biggs Ford Prehistoric ☑

Other name(s) Snyder #35, #42 Historic ☐

Brief Description: Late Woodland village with 12 burials Unknown ☐

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

☑ Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Biggs Ford Site (18FR14) is an exceptionally well-preserved multicomponent Late Woodland village in Frederick County, Maryland. It is situated in a large floodplain complex near a bend in the Monocacy River, just north of the town of Frederick. Details regarding the soils at the site are scanty (as there is no formally published report). A dark topsoil lies atop a light colored clayey subsoil that is very distinct. It is likely that the rich floodplain soil deposits account for the location of the site.

The site was known to local collectors for decades before any systematic excavation was ever performed there. The first documented subsoil testing was a brief examination in the mid 1950s by Spencer O. Geasey, a well known amateur archeologist and prominent member of the Archeological Society of Maryland. No details are known regarding this early work, but Geasey did encounter undisturbed archeological deposits and features below the plowzone. Geasey later would donate his collection of materials from the site to the Maryland Historical Trust and would be the first to notify the Trust (then the Maryland Geological Survey, Division of Archeology) that a proposed sewer interceptor would soon cross the site. Data recovery excavations were subsequently conducted by the Division of Archeology to mitigate the impact to the site. The local landowner granted permission for excavation within the pipeline right-of-way and work commenced in October of 1969. Local volunteers provided much of the labor, which continued until July of 1970.

Prior to the excavations related to the sewer line, small test holes were dug across the site to gain a better understanding of the site stratigraphy and soil makeup. Researchers discovered that the light-colored clayey subsoil could be easily differentiated from the much darker plowzone. Data recovery involved the mechanical excavation of approximately 25 to 35 cm of this dark plow disturbed soil using a road grader. Excavation was limited to a long strip measuring approximately 7 X 230 meters where the site would be impacted by the sewer line installation. The top of the exposed subsoil was then hand scraped using trowels, flat-bladed shovels, or hoes to reveal soil stains and possible features. Some of the features turned out to be rodent disturbances, but a majority did not. In the small section of the site within the right-of-way, hundreds of postmolds were present along with over 30 other cultural features.

Not all of the postmolds could be excavated due to time constraints, but all were accurately mapped. A few of the postmolds were cross sectioned, as were all of the other features lying wholly within the excavation trench. Those extending outside the trench were only partially excavated. After photographing and mapping of the cross section, the second half of each feature was hand-excavated with trowels. All soils were screened, and large dirt samples were saved from several of the large pits and subsequently washed through window screen. In addition to a lot of rather randomly placed postmolds, mapping and excavation of features revealed 5 elongated refuse-filled pits arranged end-to-end in a large arc, 10 graves, at least 2 rectangular structures (with parallel sides and rounded corners), possible palisades, and numerous circular pits (some appear to be hearths) scattered at random throughout the site.

The features reveal at least two Late Woodland components at the site; a Montgomery Complex (AD 1000-1450) component associated with the elongated pits and a Luray Complex (AD 1300-1500) component associated with the randomly scattered circular pits and possibly a palisade. The former is associated with crushed quartz and rock tempered Shepard wares and refuse pits laid out in an arcing or circular pattern. The latter is associated with very distinctive mussel shell tempered Keyser wares. These distinctive wares were largely segregated within the site based on the form of the pit (elongated or circular) in which they were found. All of the graves, except one (represented by fragmentary human crania) appear to be related to the later Luray Complex and some are intrusive into the elongated pits.

Three of the pit features were subjected to radiocarbon dating. A sample of charcoal was removed from Feature 4, one of the elongated pits, which contained 3 pipe fragments, 38 rimsherds, 700 bodysherds, 28 points/point fragments, 2 chipped stone netsinkers, 3 drills, 1 scraper, 783 flakes, 6 quartz crystals, a shell bead, 75 pieces of shell, 6 turtle shell bowl fragments, 21 turtle shell fragments, 1154 bone fragments, 5 corn cob fragments, 1 unidentified artifact, charred seeds, charred wood, and stones. The pottery sherds were primarily quartz or limestone tempered and many can be identified as Shepard ware. In addition, 50 pieces of human skull (apparently two young adult females) indicate that the pit was used as a grave at some point. Radiocarbon analysis of the charcoal yielded an uncalibrated date of 915 ± 60 years before present. Calibrated (2 sigma), this date corresponds to the calendar years AD 1017-1226, squarely within the accepted date range for the Montgomery Complex. Feature 6 also yielded a radiocarbon date. Feature 6 is one of the circular pits and contained 27 Keyser bodysherd, 10 possible Keyser bodysherds, 31 shell tempered body sherds, 1 quartz and shell tempered bodysherd, 2 quartz tempered body sherds, 1 grit tempered bodysherd, 1 sand tempered body sherd, 2 quartz point fragments, 72 quartz flakes, 114 other quartz fragments (shatter etc.), 102 burned bones, 177 animal bones, 14 fish bones, 7 mussell shell fragments, 141 snail shell fragments, stones, and charred wood. The uncalibrated date obtained through C-14 analysis of the charcoal from Feature 6 was 765 ± 70 years before present. When calibrated (2 sigma), this translates into a likely calendrical date between AD 1150-1320. This date is generally early, but does overlap with the accepted date range for Luray Complex sites. The final feature to be subjected to radiocarbon dating, Feature 20, was also a refuse-filled pit, containing 3 Shepard rimsherd, 19 Shepard bodysherds, 14 possible Shepard bodysherds, 16 possible Page bodysherds, 22 quartz tempered bodysherds, 1 stone tempered bodysherd, 5 sand tempered bodysherds, 2 projectile points/point fragments, 1 quartz core, 80 flakes, 16 pieces of shatter, 16 cobbles, 273 bone fragments, 1 clam shell disk, 24 mussell shell fragments, 3 terrapin shell fragments, 1 musk turtle shell fragment, 4 snail shell fragments, charred wood, and stones. The charcoal yielded an uncalibrated date of 550 ± 90 years before present, which is calibrated (2 sigma) to be between AD 1269-1515. This date is, again, within the acceptable range for the Montgomery Complex. Altogether, this would seem to indicate that the site was occupied during the late 13th and early 14th centuries.

Several soil samples were retained from the various features, and some were submitted for palynological analysis. Pollen and spores were very scarce in all of the samples. In samples from Features 2 (a burial) and 4 (see above), a few grass grains, ragweed, and an occasional linden or possible yew fragment was observed. However, the assemblage from Feature 6 (see above) is much more robust. Details concerning the ethnobotanical assemblage from Feature 6 can be found in the linked Ethnobotany Profile for 18FR14, but generally the pollen assemblage suggests clearance for cultivation.

The ten graves at Biggs Ford contained the remains of some 18 individuals. All appear to be associated with the later Luray occupation, with the exception of two young adult females who are represented by several skull fragments intermingled within Feature 4. The remaining human remains were 6 neonates, 6 infants, 3 juveniles, and 1 adult male age 40-49. Periostitis and other skeletal abnormalities were noted on some of the remains. Those graves where preservation is adequate (the juveniles and the adult male) indicate a preference for single, flexed burials with heads oriented to the east or south. Typical grave goods include drilled marginella shell beads, shell disk beads, flaked stone tools, and pottery (including a whole Keyser pot with punctated lugs and an incised rim). In addition, red and/or yellow ochre covered some of the remains. Perhaps the most exceptional of the graves, is that of the adult male, who was buried with what appears to be a bow, a quiver with 10 arrows, a vasiform steatite pipe, modified bird claw and wing bones (possible necklace?), a 2-hole stone gorget, two celts, 2 bone awls, and a beaver incisor.

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MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Site Number: 18FR14 **Site Name:** Biggs Ford

Other name(s) Snyder #35, #42

Prehistoric ☑ Historic ☐ Unknown ☐

Brief Description: Late Woodland village with 12 burials

As no formal report has ever been published concerning the Biggs Ford site, there is no precise count of artifact types from the site. Collections from the site (both Geasey's and the collection from the sewer line project) were reexamined in the late 1970s as part of Peck's Monocacy Valley Survey and again in 2003 as part of a National Endowment for the Humanities funded project by the Maryland Archeological Conservation (MAC) lab. The tallies provided below come primarily from the MAC lab study in consultation with extant accession records and field notes, with the exception of the diagnostic lithic counts, which come primarily from Peck's analysis.

A total of 4,551 ceramic sherds and one whole pot were recovered from 18FR14. The whole pot is a small Keyser vessel with punctated lugs and an incised rim. Identifiable Late Woodland ceramic sherds include 66 Page, 1108 Shepard, 24 Shenks Ferry, and 755 Keyser specimens. An Early Woodland component is also represented at the site by the presence of 2 Selden Island and 3 Vinette I sherds. At least 142 of the various sherds are rimsherds. In addition to the ceramic vessels, 16 ceramic pipe fragments (7 with various surface decorations), a ceramic pendant, and 6 baked clay lumps were also recovered.

The lithic assemblage of 7,630 objects from 18FR14 included 7,455 flaked stone objects, 6 groundstone objects, 3 steatite vessel fragments, and other lithics. Most of the material is quartz, followed by rhyolite, and other materials. Diagnostic tools recovered from the site include 1 Kirk point, 1 LeCroy, 2 Guilford Lanceolates, 1 Brewerton eared-notched point, 4 Lackawaxen points, 2 Bare Island, 5 Savannah River stemmed, 1 Halifax side-notched, 1 Koens-Crispin, 5 Susquehanna Broadspears, 1 Vernon point, 1 Orient Fishtail, 2 Piscataways, 1 Rossville, 2 Accokeek, 1 Wormans Mill, 14 Selby Bay points, 34 elongate triangular points, 144 Madison/Potomac points, and 76 Levannas. In addition to the diagnostic projectile points, 191 unidentifiable point fragments were recovered. Other flaked stone lithics include 37 bifaces, 10 drills, 7 scrapers, 2 chipped stone netsinkers, 6,613 pieces of debitage, and numerous fragments of shatter. The six groundstone items were 2 celts, a 2-hole gorget, a stone discoidal, a vasiform pipe, and a sandstone pipe bowl. Most of the remaining lithics are nowhere enumerated (minimal estimates are provided above), but 1 grinding stone, 1 pitted stone, 6 quartz crystals, cobbles, stones, and fire-cracked rock are listed in the original accession records for the site.

Extremely good faunal preservation was observed at the site. A total of 10,337 unmodified faunal remains were excavated, along with 96 modified faunal objects. The unmodified faunal objects include 305 mussel shell pieces, 521 snail shell fragments, and 9,513 bone/tooth/claw fragments. Species represented within the last group include various fish, turtle and terrapin species, squirrels, rabbits, muskrat, beaver, dog, deer and elk. The modified faunal remains include a bone fish hook, 2 bone awls, 2 bird bone cylinders (possible beads), a birds head carved from bone, a modified claw, 70 shell beads, 2 shell disks, 2 drilled shell pendants, and 10 turtle bowl fragments. In addition to these enumerated items, several bones seem to exhibit evidence of polishing and some may be burned. These objects are included in the count of "unmodified" faunal objects as no formal analysis of them has yet been performed.

In addition to the items described above, several of the features yielded charred wood, charred corn cobs, charred seeds (including corn kernels), and charred beans. However, no formal analysis of these materials has ever been published. Some of the more uncommon/exotic objects from the site were the 9 marginella shell beads (mentioned previously), a charred bow, five lumps of red ochre, and 4 lumps of yellow ochre, all of which came from burial contexts.

The only historic items recovered from the site were 3 pieces of porcelain, 1 fragment of glass, and 3 unidentified objects.

The Biggs Ford site (18FR14) is an exceptionally well preserved site with tremendous research potential. Numerous intact deposits were encountered during excavations associated with the installation of a sewer interceptor through the site. Datable carbon was present as well as very good bone preservation and abundant corn remains. These factors, coupled with the fact that the vast majority of the site was untouched by the sewer line and remains undeveloped, suggest that there is much more to learn at Biggs Ford.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00005951, 00005981, 00006808, JPPM-NEH